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of the dressing room reserves, one can easily see what pandemonium would ensue if all the men should be whistling while persons were making up and trying to think of their lines.

For many years one never saw any peacock feathers in decorations of the stage. Birds of all kinds, particularly flying birds, were barred from these effects. It was Irving who broke this tradition.

The first thing actors will do when they hear the name of the play they are to act in is to see if there are thirteen letters in the title or thirteen persons in the cast. Then they wait with bated breaths to learn if the day of production is to be the thirteenth. This superstition, of course, originated with the Lord's Supper.

Once I was in a play called "A Drop of Poison." It had thirteen letters in the title, thirteen persons in the cast, and was produced on the thirteenth day of the month. All the actors suffered greatly, the superstition being that some one would die during the run of the piece. But the play itself came to so speedy an end that no actor could have beaten it out unless he had died of heart failure or had shot himself.

One must not place boots on a shelf or a table. Neither must he put an umbrella or a hat on a bed. Probably this superstition originated in a sense of order. One night there were a couple of actors in my rooms. I chanced to throw my umbrella on the bed, and one of them grab-



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Being in a Dress-  
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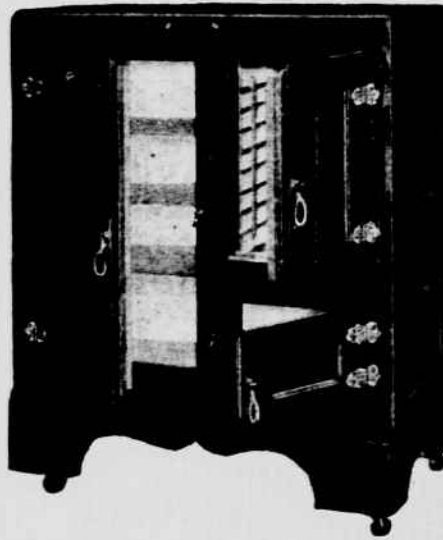
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bed it up, exclaiming, "Oh, my God!" On another occasion a visiting actor saw me on the point of putting his hat on a bed, and grabbed it just in time. That night he had a telegram from his wife that her father had had a stroke of paralysis but was living. I said to him afterward that I supposed if I had actually put the hat down on the bed the old gentleman would have died, and he answered very gravely, "Well, you almost did!" implying that it was only that hair-breadth miss that saved him.

Then there is the superstition about the black cat, and that of the cracked mirror; but these are no longer powerful. Certain theaters are regarded as unlucky, just as ships are thought by sailors to be "Jonah boats." But there is generally a reason behind this,—financial difficulties, fires or panics that have recurred too frequently, and all that sort of thing.

There is a superstition that if one person dies in a company three will die. Personally I know of only one case where that came true, and am not sure if the three deaths all occurred in one season, as they should to fulfil the prophecy.

THE most malicious superstition of the stage today is that certain actors or actresses are hoodoos—that they are unlucky. Surely this is not peculiar to actors; but the working out of it in the dramatic profession is a most cruel process of injustice. The idea usually starts with the fact that an actor or actress is unlucky for a short space of time in the plays they appear in or the parts they are cast for. Until he has safely passed the danger period, every young actor is

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